DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 308 602 EA 021 100

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TITLE How To Give Your Instructional Assistants an A+ Training Program.
INSTITUTION David Douglas Public Schools, Portland, Oreg.
PUB DATE 23 Jun 89
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (Seaside, OR, June 23, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Job Training; Personnel; Personnel Evaluation; *Staff Development; *Teacher Aides; *Teacher Effectiveness; Teachers; *Training Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Assistant Plus Program; *David Douglas School District OR

ABSTRACT

This program is an effort of the David Douglas School District (Oregon) to provide specific training experiences for classified employees who assist with instruction. The program is intended to ease the training burden on teachers, provide district wide continuity of training experiences, and communicate the importance of the assistant's job responsibilities. Six phases compose the program: (1) needs assessment; (2) planning; (3) training; (4) evaluation; (5) recognition; and (6) future plans. This program is a low-cost, but effective training experience. Comment and evaluation forms are appended. (SI)

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DAVID DOUGLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 40

How to Give Your Instructional Assistants an A+ Training Program

Presented at the

Fifteenth Annual Conference

Confederation of Oregon School Administrators

June 23, 1989

Seaside, Oregon

Presented by:

Ronald Russell, Assistant Superintendent

Barbara Rommel, Staff Development Coordinator

DAVID DOUGLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 40

Assistant PLUS Program

Paraprofessionals Learning Useful Skills

The Assistant PLUS Program is a recently developed effort of the David Douglas School District to provide specific training experiences for classified employees who assist with instruction. Prior to the development of A+, the district had relied upon on-the-job training exclusively, leading teachers to frequently complain that having an instructional assistant was more trouble than help. With a growing, but unstable, enrollment the need for instructional assistants was increasing. A planned training program was definitely needed to insure that new instructional assistants were prepared to carry out their basic job responsibilities. This program would ease the training burden on the teachers, provide district wide continuity of training experiences, and communicate the importance of the assistant's job responsibilities. This packet of materials is intended to provide other districts with information on the steps David Douglas used to plan and implement a low cost, but effective, training experience tailored to address district needs.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE A+ PROGRAM

PHASE 1 Needs Assessment

A committee of teachers and administrators discussed the need for an assistants training program and recommended one be developed.

Personal interviews of several instructional assistants and teachers were conducted to determine training needs.

PHASE 2 Planning

Staff Development Coordinator drafted an outline of training topics.

Training outline presented to district administrators for their input.

Training outline presented to teachers who have worked with instructional assistants for their input.

a. Written survey sent
b. Meeting held

Training content adapted to address concerns of teachers and administrators

Plans for training activities presented to school board

Planning considerations:

Training should be conducted on district time

Since instructional assistants are often hired up to two months after the school year begins, the training sessions should be structured to accommodate new hires.

District employees should have first priority; however, volunteers and instructional assistant applicants may attend the sessions on a space available basis.

PHASE 3 Training

The first series of training activities was titled Basic Training. Its objective was to provide general information and specific strategies for working with students and generally assisting the teacher in the classroom. The Basic Training class outline follows:

Session 1

The Instructional Assistant is a member of the educational team
Defining job responsibilities
Building cohesive working relationships
Observing confidentiality
Taking the initiative
Communicating effectively

Session 2

The Instructional Assistant helps manage the classroom
- Organizing for instruction
- Learning classroom practices and procedures
- Giving directions
- Managing student behavior
- Contributing to the classroom climate
- Controlling paperwork

Session 3

The Instructional Assistant helps students learn
- Setting lesson goals
- Presenting information/modeling
- Monitoring student learning
- Using active participation
- Responding to students
- Providing effective practice

The sessions were held from 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. on three consecutive Mondays. Participants could attend one session or the entire series. The series was repeated to accommodate late hires and schedule conflicts. Registration materials were sent to the teacher with a cover letter to facilitate communication. The principal's signature was required on the registration form so he/she would know which assistants would be attending the sessions and when they would be out of the building. Since the training was intended to be held on district time, assistants whose hours didn't match the training time could substitute the training session for their regular hours. Forty-five instructional assistants attended the Basic Training sessions.

Following Basic Training, several one session training opportunities were offered to address specific needs identified by teachers on the survey and in group meetings.

PLUS 2 Super Reading

This three hour session was instructed by the district Reading Development Specialist. Assistants from grades one and two and Chapter I Reading learned basic phonics principles and specific procedures used in Super Reading, a district-developed beginning reading instructional program.

PLUS 3 Using Grade Master

This session taught assistants how to use the Grade Master computer program. The one and one-half hour session prepared assistants to perform computer assisted record keeping.

PLUS 4 Assisting the Physically Handicapped Student

This three hour session prepared assistants to work with physically handicapped students.

PHASE 4 Evaluation

Evaluation forms were distributed to instructional assistants following each training session. All participants indicated that they would recommend the training session to other assistants. Comments indicated a positive response to the program in general and the content of the sessions specifically. All participants were able to list skills they learned that would enhance their job performance.

Evaluation forms were also sent to the teachers whose assistants participated in the sessions. All of the teachers responding indicated that the training was beneficial to their assistants. Many commented on observable changes in behavior following a training session. Recommendations were made regarding future training offerings and program refinements.

PHASE 5 Recognition

Special certificates of participation were designed to recognize completion of the training program. A copy of the certificate was placed in the assistant's personnel file and the original sent to the participant. The certificates turned out to be a very positive aspect of the program. Participants displayed them in their classrooms and at home. Copies have been included in job transfer requests.

PHASE 6 Future Plans

Next year an Advanced Training component will join the Basic Training series. The Advanced Training will provide application level experiences in the areas of classroom management, instructional assistance, and interpersonal relationships.

The Basic Training series will be extended to include follow-up activities to reinforce the skills learned in the sessions.

A corresponding session for teachers on how to work with instructional assistants is also planned.

District volunteers will be personally invited to attend the Basic Training sessions next year.

CONCLUSION

The David Douglas Assistant PLUS Program has met the district's need for effectively preparing instructional assistants with the knowledge and skills needed to assist the classroom teacher. The effort has been well received by the school board, administrators, teachers, and, most enthusiastically, the assistants themselves. Refinements will continue to be made and long-term evaluations compiled, but the A PLUS Program has proved to be a positive step in the district's effort to help students learn.

For more information please call:

Dr. Ronald Russell, Assistant Superintendent
David Douglas School District No. 40
(503) 252-2900 Ext. 205

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DAVID DOUGLAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS MULTNOMAH CO. DISTRICT NO. 40
DR. ANTHONY R. PALERMINI, SUPERINTENDENT • 1500 SE 130th Ave., Portland, OR 97233 • (503) 252-2900

TO: Teachers who work with Instructional Assistants

FROM: Barbara Rommel

RE: Instructional Assistants Training Program

In response to teacher requests for district training of instructional assistants (aides), I have scheduled a series of Basic Training workshops which will focus on the three main areas of the assistant's job description. An outline of the topics is attached. The Basic Training workshops will initiate the A Plus Program (Paraprofessionals Learning Useful Skills). Additional workshops will be scheduled through the year to offer specific training that would best meet your needs. The Basic Training workshops are scheduled during the school day to allow the assistant to be trained on district time. An assistant whose hours are other than 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. should substitute the training hours for working hours for that day. Please discuss with your principal which sessions you would like your assistant to attend.

I would like to meet with you to discuss information that you would like included in the A Plus Program. I have scheduled a meeting on Thursday, September 29, 1988, 3:45 - 4:30 p.m. in the Staff Development Classroom, District Office. If you cannot attend the meeting please send me your comments concerning these issues:

1. What problems have you encountered in working with instructional assistants that you would like to see addressed in the Basic Training workshop?

2. What additional training would you like your assistant to have? (Super Reading, DISTAR, AV Equipment use, etc.)

3. What type of information would be useful to you in working with an instructional assistant?

   ___ a. Workshop_____

   ___ b. Printed material

   ___ c. Meeting with other teachers to share ideas

   ___ d. _____

I truly hope that this training program will prepare your instructional assistants to extend their skills to better help you teach students.

BR:ll
21SEPT88

David Douglas School District
ASSISTANT PLUS PROGRAM

Paraprofessionals Learning Useful Skills

MEMO TO:

FROM: Barbara Rommel

RE: Assistant Plus Training in Super Reading

Julie Collins has offered to conduct a special session of Super Reading training for instructional assistants. The training would focus on how to present a Super Reading lesson. This session is being offered as part of the A+ program because several of you requested it. It should help your assistants become more familiar with beginning reading instruction and Super Reading in particular.

The training will take place:
Friday, October 21, 1988
8:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Reading Assessment Center
Ventura Park Elementary School

If you would like your assistant to participate please return the registration form or call me at extension 261.

****

Registration for Super Reading Training
A+ Program

NAME_____ BLDG._____

Teacher's Signature_____

Principal's Signature _____

Return to Staff Development, District Office before October 19, 1988

ASSISTANT
•PLUS•
PROGRAM

ASSISTANT
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PROGRAM

DAVID DOUGLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT #40
ASSISTANT PLUS CLASSES - PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORM

Class Title _____ Date _____

Instructor _____

Please list some things you learned in this class that will help you in your job.

Would you recommend this class to other instructional assistants? _____

Comments:

What additional training opportunities would you like to see the district offer?

ASSISTANT
•PLUS•
PROGRAM

DAVID DOUGLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT #40

ASSISTANT PLUS CLASSES - TEACHER EVALUATION FORM
Basic Training

Was this training beneficial to your instructional assistant? _____

Comments:

Suggestions for future training:

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DAVID DOUGLAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS MULTNOMAH CO. DISTRICT NO. 40
DR. ANTHONY R. PALERMINI, SUPERINTENDENT • 1500 SE 130th Ave., Portland, OR 97233 • (503) 252-2900

March 16, 1989

TO: ALL SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS

FROM: BOB CHUDEK

RE: A-PLUS PROGRAM

Barbara Rommel is again providing and inservice for all special education instructional assistants on April 6 from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the central office board room. This workshop is designed to provide specific skills in working with students who have occupational therapy, physical therapy, or adaptive P.E. needs. Because students who have these needs may enroll in any of our schools, this workshop should be especially useful for all instructional assistants.

If for any reason you believe that your assistant could not benefit from attendance at this workshop, please call me at 252-2900 ext 209.

BC/es
cc: principals
Barbara Rommel

DAVID DOUGLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT # 40

ASSISTANT •PLUS• PROGRAM

ANNOUNCING A WORKSHOP FOR
INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS

ASSISTING PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

- April 6, 1989
- 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.
- Board Room, District Office
- Instructors: Marilyn Redwine, Physical Therapist
  Peggy Wokitch, Occupational Therapist
  Suzanne Marter, Adaptive P.E. Specialist

This workshop will teach you specific methods of working with students who have occupational therapy, physical therapy, or adaptive P.E. needs. This training will improve your effectiveness in working with physically handicapped students.

Please call extension 261 or 204 to register.

David Douglas School District
ASSISTANT PLUS PROGRAM

Paraprofessionals Learning Useful Skills

+1 Basic Training

This class is designed to familiarize Instructional Assistants with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively assist classroom teachers. The class will offer information and group activities matched to the major areas of the instructional assistant's job responsibilities. The class is intended for beginning instructional assistants but is also appropriate for experienced paraprofessionals who can use the information to refine and extend their skills. An outline of basic training topics follows:

Session 1

The Instructional Assistant is a member of the educational team

- Defining job responsibilities
- Building cohesive working relationships
- Observing confidentiality
- Taking the initiative
- Communicating effectively

Session 2

The Instructional Assistant helps manage the classroom

- Organizing for instruction
- Learning classroom practices and procedures
- Giving directions
- Managing student behavior
- Contributing to the classroom climate
- Controlling paperwork

Session 3

The Instructional Assistant helps students learn

- Setting lesson goals
- Presenting information/modeling
- Monitoring student learning
- Using active participation
- Responding to students
- Providing effective practice

Training Schedule:

The sessions will be repeated through two series to allow newly hired assistants to join the class as soon as they are hired. The series of three sessons may be completed in any order. Participants may attend one or more sessions. All sessions will be held from 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. in the Staff Development Classroom.

Session 1 - Monday, October 3
Session 2 - Monday, October 10
Session 3 - Monday, October 17
Session 1 - Monday, October 24
Session 2 - Monday, October 31
Session 3 - Monday, November 7

Participants will receive a certificate indicating the training completed. Current district employees will receive first consideration for registration. Other interested participants may enroll as space permits. Please call Barbara Rommel (EX 261) if you need additional information.

****

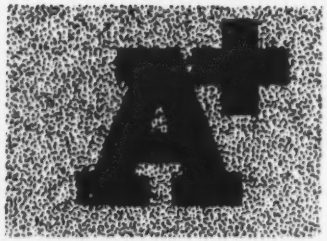
Registration
A+ Basic Training Fall '88

Name _____

Position

Certificate of Participation

David Douglas School District
Staff Development Program



ASSISTANT
• PLUS •
PROGRAM

Awarded to _____

for successfully completing _____ hours of Instructional Assistant Training.

_____ _____

date program coordinator

A. R. Palmquist

superintendent